

Selected Walking & Hiking Opportunities

Town of Harpswell

There are many opportunities for walking & hiking in Harpswell ranging from shared-use paths to simple trails on remote islands. Many of Harpswell's quiet side roads serve as excellent locales for walking. Listed below are 6 selected walking areas in descending order of walking challenge – from moderate to easy; none have difficult trails. All offer a non-motorized environment with public access and parking (in some places restricted). Some of the properties are privately owned. Stay on the trail. Please respect all regulations and practice 'Leave-No-Trace' trail ethics. Unless otherwise noted, these trails are only open during daylight hours.

Austin Cary Lot, Great Island: Extensive salt water frontage on Long Reach & Doughty Cove as well as fresh water wetlands are featured amongst the distinctive topography of north-south running ridges. This 222 acre property is managed by the Baxter State Park Authority for timber harvesting and limited recreational use. Logging and old 'woods' roads form a network of unmarked walking and X-C skiing trails. Hiking is challenging since there is little trail maintenance with the "passive" recreation stipulation imposed on this demonstration woodlot. Some 'bushwacking' required to get to the shore.

Directions: There are two access points. Turn right on Long Reach Lane, which is approximately 1.3 miles south from the Brunswick town line on Rt. 24 (just past Harpswell Auto). Best parking is 0.6 miles on the right at the West end of the property (although there are other turnoff points). The Harpswell Islands school is approximately 1.5 miles south from the Brunswick town line on Rt. 24 (the Gurnet bridge). Park in front of the small gravel lot on the right upon entering the school property. Walk through the lot for trail access.



Cliff Trail, Great Island:

A 1.5 mile loop trail crosses near the highest point in Harpswell. This marked trail features a shore walk along the tidal Strawberry Creek, two 'fairy-house' zones and spectacular views from 150 foot cliffs overlooking Long Reach. This property is owned by the town of Harpswell and is located behind the town offices and the Harpswell Recycling Center.

Directions: There are two convenient access points for this trail. Behind the town offices on Mountain Road

(between Rt. 24 and Rt. 123) is one trailhead --- the far corner of the parking lot nearest the water. The other access point is located about 50 yards behind the Harpswell Community TV station along Community Drive, the entrance road to the Recycling Center. Park at the TV station or along the road outside the gate to the Recycling Center. Walk along the road into the Recycling Center and the trail begins in the woods to the right.

Long Reach Preserve, Great Island: A 1- mile, marked, loop trail crosses a high ridge with views of Quahog Bay, a 'perched' inland bog and shore access to Long Reach. Round-trip walking time is approximately 1 hour. This 90 acre property is managed by the Harpswell Heritage Land Trust. Trail maps are available at the trailhead and at the Land Trust office.

Directions: The Trufant-Summerton ballfield is located approximately 3 miles south from the Brunswick town line on Rt. 24. Park on the right upon entering the ballfield property for trail access.

Thalheimer Farm, Orr's Island: A farm road and woods trails offer a variety of walking options to experience the fields, orchards and shore of this old farm. This 118 acre property, operated by Bowdoin College as its Coastal Studies Center, makes up the entire peninsula between Long Cove and Harpswell Sound. This is an active research and residence facility. Please stay on designated paths and follow all regulations. Trail maps available at the parking area.

Directions: Take a right off Route 24 approximately 1.7 mile south of the Orr's Island bridge onto Bayview Road. Follow the road to the end --- about 1 mile --- to reach the farm. Park in the designated spaces (limited parking) on the right & left on the edge of the property. Do not drive past the parking area into the farm. No camping and no groups larger than 10 permitted.

Giant Stairs, Bailey Island: This ¼-mile shore walk features open views of the Atlantic Ocean, crashing surf on rocky cliffs (when waves are high) and the noted 'Giant Stairs' formed by differential erosion of an intrusive volcanic dike. This trail is located near private property. Please respect the adjacent landowners' privacy and stay along the shore.

Directions: Approximately 1.5 miles south of the Cribstone bridge (just after seeing Mackerel Cove on the right), turn left on Washington street. Park at the Episcopal chapel (when there are not services) or carefully along the street so as to not block traffic. Signs are posted at either end of the trail indicating access points.

Mitchell Field, Harpswell Neck. The paved roads (some sections gravel) of this former US Navy facility provide 1.5 miles of shared-use path suitable for walkers, bicyclists and rollerblades. The 116 acre property has woods and open fields that offer sweeping vistas across the bay with views of Mt. Washington (on clear days). Grades are gentle. Portable toilet facilities are provided.

Directions: The entrance is 6.9 miles south of the Brunswick town line on Route 123 (look for blue water tower). The parking area is along the fence just before the fire station. Although the gates are locked, there is a bike/ped entrance just to the left.

This information has been compiled as a service to the community. The town does not monitor or maintain the trails. Changes in trail conditions are to be expected. Questions or Comments--- please contact the Harpswell Recreation Department, 833-5771, harpswellrec@gwi.net.

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